



Hidalgo County Indigent Defense

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July 24, 2009

Mr. Joel Lieurance
Research Specialist
Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense
205 W. 14th St., Suite 700
Tom C. Clark Building
Austin, Texas 78711-2066

Dear Mr. Lieurance

Re. Review of Hidalgo County's Indigent Defense Systems

Below are the responses to the findings and recommendations regarding the site visit of Hidalgo County's Indigent Defense Systems conducted February 9-13, 2009.

1. Contract Attorney for Juvenile Detention Hearings

Hidalgo County is now using a rotational system for appointing counsel at juvenile detention hearings.

Completion date: September, 2009

2. Juvenile Plan

Management will work with the board of judges to list the required times for appointment of juvenile counsel. The juvenile plan will be updated with the new indigent defense plan submission due November 1.

Completion date: November, 2009

3. Juvenile detention hearing form

Management will work with the board of judges to review the current procedure for tracking detention hearings.

Completion date: December, 2009

4. Appointed Juvenile Attorney Must Represent Their Clients at Detention Hearing.

With the move to rotational system for juvenile detention hearings, this is no longer an issue.

5. Attorney Selection Process

The board of judges will annually review the distribution of attorney appointments to ensure that they are made in a fair, neutral, and non-discriminatory manner.

I would like to commend The Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense and you for all the assistance you provide. Please continue the wonderful job you are doing to improve the delivery of indigent defense services throughout the State of Texas and the County of Hidalgo.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Isidro Sepulveda, Jr.
Hidalgo County Indigent Defense Policy Director

cc: The Honorable Aida Salinas Flores, Local Administrative District Judge
The Honorable Fred Garza, Local Administrative Statutory County Judge
The Honorable Mario E. Ramirez, Jr., Chairman of Juvenile Board
Mr. Raymundo Eufrazio, County Auditor
Mr. Jaime E. Gonzalez, Chief Public Defender